

## **General Clay Techniques:**

Joining pieces together: When joining pieces together in the leather-hard clay stage always remember to score (scratch up the surface) and apply slip (watery clay). Pieces may fall off if not properly attached. Make sure to smooth clay all around joined pieces.

When a piece is complete, let the piece slowly dry out to avoid cracking. You may want to cover the piece with a loose plastic bag for a day or so first. Then remove the bag to let it finish drying out.

To prevent warping and pieces from blowing up try to get all areas the same thickness of no more than ½ inch. Try to keep from making air pockets as you put clay pieces together. If you are wheel throwing- wedge clay first to get air bubbles out.

If a piece dries out more than you wanted it to, you have a couple options: Either spray the project with water and wrap lots of wet paper towels around the piece for 1-3 days or scrap the project and start again if you don't have days to wait. Make sure you plan ahead, if you want to keep working on a project, keep it wet and wrapped up.

# **Cautions**

## **Dry Clay in Powder form:**

Long-term exposure to the silicates in the dry clay form can settle in your lungs and can cause multiple health problems such as cancer. Take caution to not stir up the clay dust in the air, including blowing clay dust off your bone-dry clay project and shaking clay mats.

## **Broom and Dust Pan:**

Clean-up of clay dust or broken projects can be a breeze, don't forget to use these tools. Once done make sure to also use the pink spray cleaner and paper towels to clean your table area to keep all clay dust under control.

## **Glaze:**

- A liquid suspension of finely ground materials that is applied by brushing, dipping, pouring, sponging, or spraying the surface of a bisque fired ceramic piece. Once done the piece needs to be fired to the temperature at which the glaze ingredients will melt together to form a glassy surface coating.

Glazing the surface makes it water tight, adds color, and creates a functional piece you can eat out of. All of the glazed you will be using in Ceramics are lead-free.

## ***Glazing Procedures- for brushing method:***

1. After your piece has been bisque fired sponge clean water on to your piece or rinse out.
2. Shake or stir the glaze you want to use (make sure the lid is on tight).
3. Using a paintbrush or sponge add glaze to your piece. Usually you will need a min. of 1 thick coat or two thin coats, depending on the glaze. Do NOT paint the bottom of the piece or any piece that will be resting on the kiln shelf when firing.
4. When done take a clean sponge and wipe off the bottom to ensure that there isn't any glaze on the bottom.
5. Clean up... Your area and supplies. Put materials back where you got them from. Rinse out all glaze cups and brushes.

## **Painting a surface:**

If you would rather paint a surface of a piece instead of glazing make sure the paint you are using says acrylic. Acrylic paint will be water resistant, but may not withstand heat such as a dishwasher. Acrylic paint works best applied to ware that will be used for decoration purposes such as Christmas tree ornaments or figurines. You will not be able to eat or drink out of a piece that has been painted with acrylic paint.

The advantage of acrylic paint is that you can mix paint color easier and be able to control the end result more. However once a piece has been glazed you may not paint over it with acrylic paint, it will just peel off. Plan accordingly, if you want a piece to be glazed and painted, glazed the areas you want to be glazed first, then once the piece has been fired paint the areas you want to paint last. Do not place a acrylic painted piece in the to be fired area. Paint will burn and make a mess all over your piece.

**Wheel Throwing Tools:**

When throwing on the wheel to make a symmetrical pot you can use a variety of tools. The most common tools you will need will be kept in a white bucket: sponge, wooden rib tool, and modeling stick. In addition to these tools, don't forget to use a bat on the wheel head.

## **Throwing on the wheel:**

- #1 Wedge up a ball of clay, beginners start with a nice clay ball about 1lb.
- #2 Get your supplies out: bat, bucket of water, and wheel throwing tools.
- #3 Place the ball of clay firmly in the center of the wheel bat.
- #4 Add some water to the top of your piece so it slides well your hands. Use water as needed through the whole process.
- #5 Turn on the wheel or start kicking.
- #6 Center the clay on the wheel, squeezing it into the center and down towards the bat. Compress any air bubbles.
- #7 Open up the inside with your thumbs, making a well. Compress the clay towards the bottom until you get about ½ inch from the bat. Do not go through your piece.
- #8 Compress the sides slowly with your fingers and make several pulls upward.
- #9 Using the sponge, smooth the form and compress the lip of the piece.
- #10 Use the modeling stick to trim off excess clay around the foot of the piece.
- #11 Write your initials in the clay slip on the bat and place to dry out slowly.
- #12 Clean up your mess! Pour water out of your bucket and clay scraps go in scrap the bucket.
- #13 Wipe down your wheel, tools and bucket. Put back for the next person to use.